The CLAW
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Student entrepreneurs find a light in the darkness

Photo by Hellen Zheng

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We appreciate letters to the editor, so long as the topics discussed remain school appropriate. These letters may not be any longer than 200 words, and can be sent to letterstotheclaw@gmail.com or brought to room A113 before or after school. We reserve the right to reject any letters for any reason, including inappropriateness, lack of space, etc. We are not required to give an explanation for rejected letters.

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Letter from the editor

First quarter of the strangest school year to exist has come to a close. Though I was at first excited about only having to go to school two days and week getting out before noon, I think everyone has realized it's not the relaxing off time we were expecting. Adjusting to this new schedule has not been without struggle, but after three months, I think I'm almost there.

Everyone has had to find ways to adjust, including drama club by putting on their fall show in a drive-in setting. Staff writer Lily Heddinghaus gives you a behind-the-scenes look at the production of the show on page 5.

Although many school sports have been pushed to spring, athletes such as Ryan Watts who participate in low risk sports have continued their seasons. Get a look into Watts's record breaking season with staff writer Tyler Chrenka on page 11. Sports Editor Landon Vuagniaux explores how the fall athletes whose seasons have been pushed to spring are preparing on pages 12-13.

Culture Editor Noah Range reviews Machine Gun Kelley's new punk rock album on page 14 and Views Editor Abi Zajac gives her view on "the Charli" and other influencer foods. The pandemic has added a new accessory to our wardrobes and staff writer Lily Heddinghaus talks to students who use their masks as a fashion statement on page 17.

Besides the craziness of COVID, politics have taken on a new life this year as we approach the election. Read our staff take on the death of Ruth Bader Ginsburg on page 18. We at The Claw are not blind to the polarizing nature of politics, so Life Editor Sarah Fidahussain and staff writer Holly Williams share their opinions on whether politics should be discussed in school on pages 20 and 21.

As we continue with this year, I hope that you strive to find better ways to function in this odd new normal. This edition of The Claw holds many stories of students taking advantage of the situation. Enjoy!

Cassidy Reaka
Editor-in-Chief

Note from the adviser: our photographers used CDC social distancing protocols for all photography in this issue.

EHS UNMASKED

JUNIOR NICOLE ANDERSON

Q. What's something in your life that you do for yourself?

A. I like to take drives. Sometimes when I'm driving home I take the long way. I just want to think about how I felt about the day and just really look back on what I've accomplished throughout the day. I like driving at night because it's just so soothing.

Q. What's something interesting that happened to you when you were learning how to drive?

A. So when I was first learning how to drive, I was pulling out of the Sam's parking lot, and I was at a stop sign. I was waiting for my turn to go and this black Mustang starts honking at me. I got really frustrated. Then he proceeded to follow me into the Walmart parking lot and he cussed out me and my mother. It was a good lesson to learn to not take it personally when people honk at you.

Journalists to reveal untold student stories

by Marian Steinmann, staff writer

Whether separated by 6 feet in the classroom or 6 miles during virtual learning, EHS students are facing an unprecedented level of isolation.

"I feel like [the hybrid schedule] has put a strain on keeping close with some of my friends who are on B days, and I know some other students feel the same way," junior Nicole Anderson said.

Other aspects of social distancing make it difficult for students to connect with one another: people aren't supposed to come within 6 feet of each other and carrying on a conversation can be challenging when you can't be near the person.

This poses a challenge for underclassmen who might not be as familiar with the people in their classes or anyone who has a full class of students he or she doesn't know. Meeting new people is difficult when you don't truly know what the person looks like.

Although nothing can be done to fix these problems, the journalism staff has developed a project to make students feel a little more connected: EHS Unmasked.

"I think we're all missing each other," said sophomore Olivia Dowdy, lead designer on the project. "Staying connected gets difficult when we can't see each other. EHS Unmasked aims to reintroduce our classmates to each other."

> "EHS Unmasked aims to reintroduce our classmates to each other."

Each week, advanced journalism students and yearbook staff members will interview six to 10 students who have a story to tell. Then they will write a short profile about each individual and display the profiles in the commons.

When the journalism staff approached Anderson and asked her to be one of the first interviewees, she was quick to help.

"I thought it was a very cool and nice way for the yearbook staff to connect to EHS students," Anderson said.

Each profile will feature a different student and a different aspect of his or her life, with topics ranging from major life goals to short anecdotes about past experiences.

Dowdy will post the profiles to the yearbook's Instagram account so that they are available to a wider audience. She and the rest of the writers hope that by spreading these short, personal pieces with the school, they can help students feel like they're truly getting to know their classmates.

"If we can't be with each other the way we used to be able to, we have to get creative with how we stay connected," Dowdy said.

Crew produces fall show like no other

by Lily Heddinghaus, staff writer

The phrase "the show must go on" has taken on a new meaning this year for EHS's drama club students.

The club has changed everything about their usual structure to perform during the pandemic and ensure the cast, crew and audience's safety.

The fall show—the Shakespearean play "A Midsummer Night's Dream"—took place at the EHS Sports Complex parking lot on Oct. 16, 17, 23 and 24 at 6:15 p.m.

"The show [was] about a month earlier than we typically perform it. This decision was made because of the outdoor element of the show," Theater Director Ashley Melton said. "The data that has been presented by the International Coalition for the Arts and the Education Theater Association for aerosol studies has found that performing arts should be moved outside whenever possible and it dramatically increases the safety of our art forms. The weather in mid-October is quite warmer than the weather in mid-November."

The set-up mimiced a drive-in movie.

"Our audience members will stay in their vehicles. Instead of selling seats in the auditorium, we are selling parking spots. The sound from the actors will be transmitted via radio station directly into the vehicles of our audience members," Mrs. Melton said.

Mrs. Melton said the programs were digital, there was no intermission and everyone was required to wear a mask. These details and plans required collaboration.

"Administration and parents [were] incredibly supportive in this planning process. We worked together to think of every human aspect possible. When someone would think of a potential issue, we would all communicate solutions for how we would make it a safe performing arts event," Mrs. Melton said. "This was no small task. We are still communicating and problem solving daily in the event that we would need to pivot into another format at our performance."

The new format of the show created many obstacles for the technical crew as well.

"This has changed almost every aspect of the show from a technical perspective," Stage Manager and senior Felicity Guttmann said. "We [had] to move the set across the street to the Sports Complex. We also have to move our light and sound equipment and set it up outside, which we've never done before."

Even on stage the actors followed safety precautions.

> "I think high school students and people in the arts in particular are the most adaptable groups of students you will ever work with."

"The hardest part [was] definitely not being able to touch. Physical touch is such an important thing while acting so we have to think of different things we can do instead," lead actress and senior Kate Hengehold said.

Senior Joe Webb feels wearing masks has been a challenge.

"Really the main thing that is different is wearing the masks," Webb said. "We plan on using clear masks, but it will still be hard to show facial expressions."

Despite these challenges, Mrs. Melton believes that the students adjusted well.

"I think high school students and people in the arts in particular are the most adaptable groups of students you will ever work with," Mrs. Melton said. "We are already incredibly used to working in masks and the changes to the format of the show are big, but they are all things that we have been eager to do in order to make our art form happen."

Because other performing arts groups have been limited, Drama Club invited them to open their show.

"We [had] a pre-show starting at 5:15 p.m. featuring live music from our Orchestra, Aca-fellaz, Bel Canto, and Chamber Choir groups," Mrs. Melton said.

Hengehold and the other actors accepted the challenge and made the most of their situation.

"It is very different which is great. It teaches us to roll with it, and it really pushes our boundaries as actors," Hengehold said.

The technical crew agrees this show [was] like no other.

"I like to look at the positive," Guttmann said. "We didn't think we were going to have a show at all this year, but now the circumstances allow us to have a super unique show."

Cast members do "The Wobble" before running the show during the last dress rehearsal before the show. Dancing to "Wobble" by V.I.C is one of drama club's pre-show traditions.

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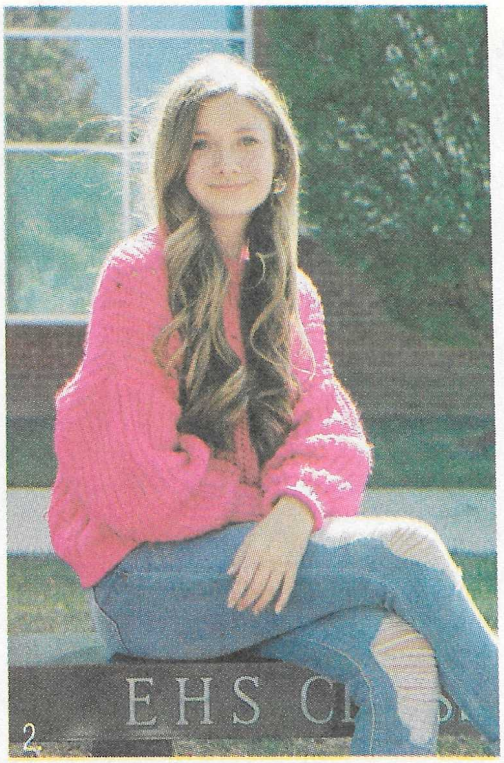

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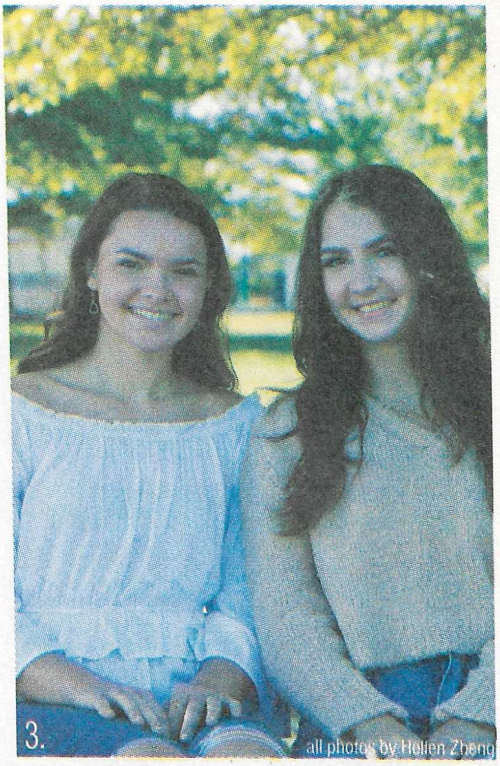
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Up and coming enterpreneurs utilize hybrid schedule to launch products

by Holly Williams, staff writer

While some students decided to binge "Tiger King" or other Netflix shows during quarantine, other students were inspired to start a business.

Sophomore Noelle Sonderegger is one of those students. She created Fika, a bracelet company, after a positive response to a post on social media displaying her jewelry. While she prefers to keep her production method a secret, her melange of designs is found on her Instagram, fikabynoellesonderegger.

"During quarantine, I had a lot of time to myself, so one day I decided to make some bracelets," Sonderegger said. "I've always wanted to start my own business, and it was the perfect time to start."

Seniors Caroline Bridges and Gracie Burroughs also partnered to create a jewelry business, Isn't It Lovely.

"Gracie and I were both looking for new jobs and the idea of starting a business just came to us," Bridges said. "We are both creative people and we love jewelry so it seemed like the perfect fit."

The pair creates a variety of custom wire-jewelry that can be found on their website, or on Instagram at isntitlovelyco. Bridges said they had to learn how to make the jewelry on their own; all of their products are handmade using wire, chains and tools.

"We sell name necklaces, letter rings, initial necklaces, small round earrings, three differnt types of bracelets and key rings," Burroughs said.

> "During quarantine, I had a lot of time to myself, so one day I decided to make some bracelets. I've always wanted to start my own business, and it was the perfect time to start."

Junior Jenae Wright launched a business, Made by Jenae, but instead of jewelry she produces stickers and T-shirts.

"During the summer and quarantine, I started designing various pieces of art and wanted to share it with others," Wright said.

Wright's products come in an assortment of colors and designs that can be found on her Etsy and Instagram, made.by.jenae. After her customers choose a design, she goes through the process of making her product. All of her designs are original, but after designing a specific product she mass produces her sticks to ensure quality uniformity.

"For stickers, I print them using a printer and sticker paper. I then seal them with laminate making them waterproof," Wright said. "For T-shirts, I use transferable vinyl to heat press my designs on the T-shirts."

Wright mostly sells locally, but she has also shipped her products to four other states. Isn't It Lovely has also made shipments to 18 different states, according to Burroughs.

While these girls make it look easy, owning a business is not for the faint of heart: many hours go into creating,

designing and managing the business. According to Wright, her business took about a month to set up, but it takes her anywhere between two and 24 hours to design each product.

> "It's very hard to keep a good balance between my academic career and my business. I prioritize my school work over my business, but I put every extra minute I have into improving my business."

For some, finding time to manage this newfounded business on top of already busy lives can be challenging.

"With the new school schedule it allows for more flexibility to create our own schedule to make time for school and our business," Bridges said. "... There are days when I will work [for the business] for 8-10 hours, days that I will work for only 2 hours, and days that are somewhere in between."

The time and effort required to create and manage these businesses does not discourage critics from offering their two cents.

"The hardest part by far was honestly just people telling me that 'it won't do well' and 'you're too young to start a small business," Sonderegger said.

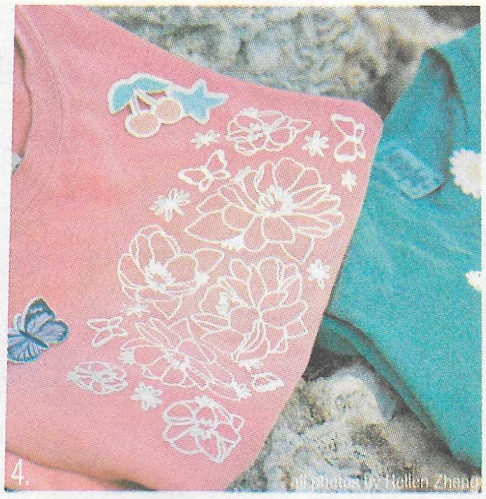
Despite these criticisms, Sonderegger is glad to have started her business when she did, but she does not plan on pursuing a career in it.

"I don't think that I would do this for the rest of my life, but I definitely think that it will last for awhile," Sonderegger said. For the time being, it's a perfect way for me to make some money right now because I'm on my own schedule."

Wright agrees, adding that it provides her hands-on experience for her future career in "mathematical applications in business."

For Burroughs though, her business has impacted her career path.

"I think that having this experience right now will help with the career I choose in the future," Burroughs said. "I've learned a lot about marketing over this time so the business has honestly led me looking into the marketing field."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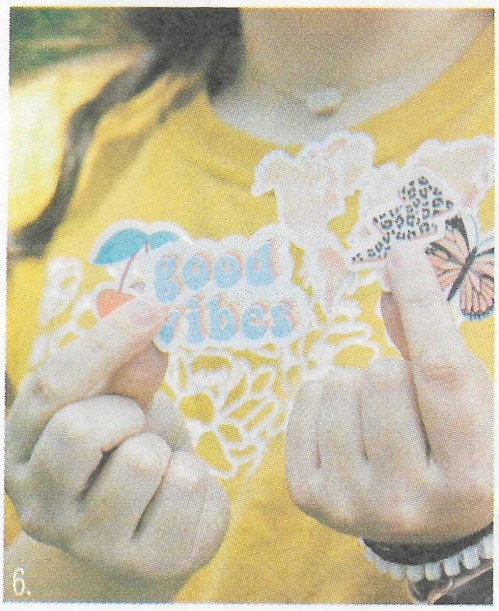

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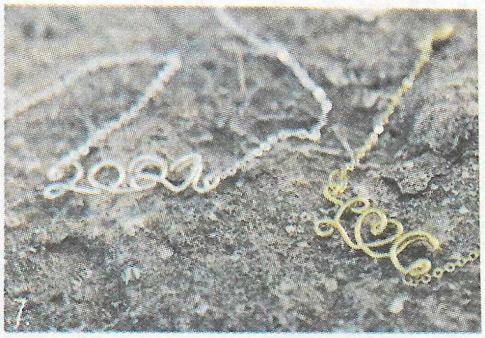
1. Although Jenae Wright only creates T-shirts and stickers now, she plans to sell notebook covers and stationery products. 2. At first Noelle Sonderegger sold her products without a brand name, but after three or four weeks she officially created her business. 3. Gracie Burroughs expresses her gratitude about partnering with her best friend Caroline Bridges. "There's no way I could do it by myself and so having someone is great and working with my best friend is even better," Burroughs said. 4. To design her products, Wright uses "Procreate" on her iPad. 5. Sonderegger speak about starting her business. "It's not easy to start a business, and to be honest I'm very proud of myself for making it this far," Sonderegger said. 6. Wright mass produces her stickers to insure quality, and on average, Wright ships 30 orders a month. 7. 8 Bridges is glad to have started her business with her friend Gracie. "I think it's very rewarding to collaborate with someone else," Bridges said. "It allows for the opportunity to bounce ideas off of each other, and Gracie and I have very similar styles and tastes, so it's very easy and fun for us to work together." 9. "It's a bit hard to do with my busy schedule, but it's so worth it," Sonderegger said. "I love being my own boss."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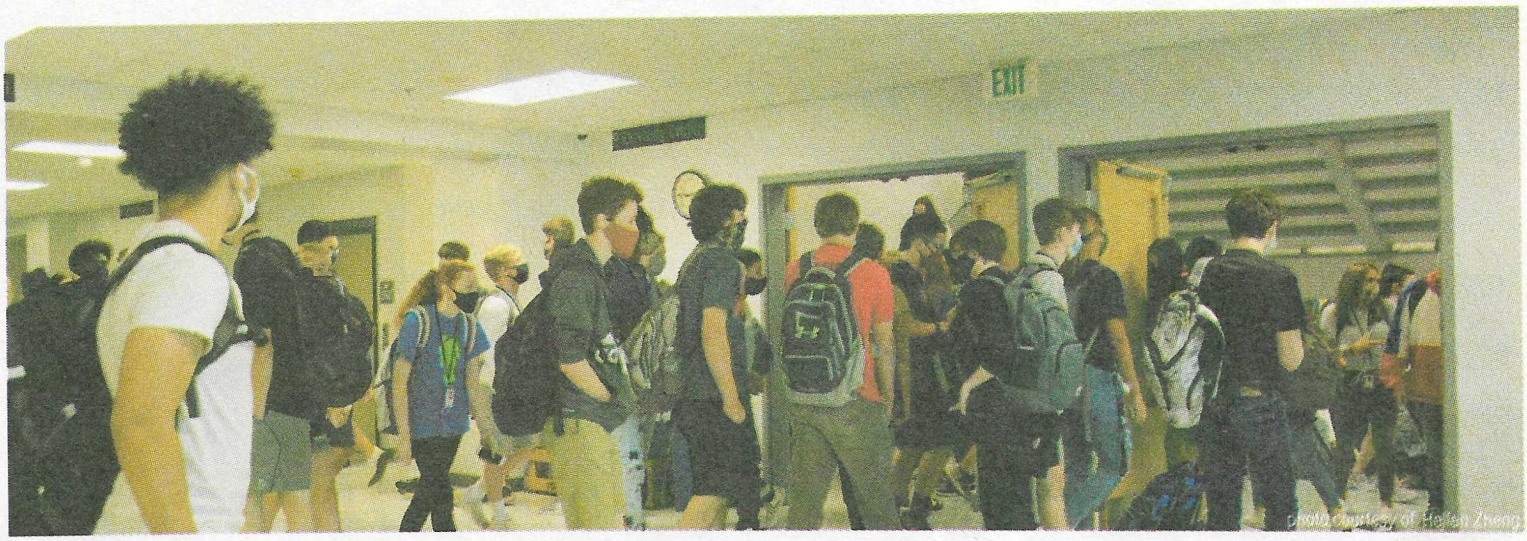


Students move toward the main staircase during passing period on Aug. 24, which was an A-student day. Students are required to wear masks to attend school in-person.

Some students reluctant to return to pre-COVID routines at school, elsewhere

by Cassi Reaka, Editor-In-Chief

Accidentally brushing against someone used to be no big deal, hugs were a normal occurrence and you didn't have to question if it was a good idea to visit your grandma.

When COVID first hit and everyone was isolating, these things were generally seen as bad ideas. However, as restrictions have been lifted and America has tried to adjust to a new normal, the line between acceptable and reprehensible actions has been blurred.

As the world is frozen in a state between normalcy and lockdown, everyone has different social boundaries. While some are still extremely cautious and limit their exposure to people outside of their families, others have resumed normal life.

Senior Mara Day has been hesitant to begin doing things outside of her home again because she doesn't want to risk infecting people. She has returned to school though and is doing some study sessions with her friends.

"I honestly don't know how safe I feel at school," Day said, " but because I have to go no matter what, it's less stressful if I just don't think about it."

Many students have returned to hanging out with their friends on a regular basis, but still take caution around crowds and strangers.

Senior Jacob Duelm began seeing his friends in person after around two months of quarantine.

Despite not feeling ready to return fully to his pre-COVID life, he feels safe at school.

"The enforced mask rule, combined with the A and B days make me feel like I have a much lower chance of getting the virus," Duelm said. "The whole back tracing things with people that have it does suck, but it's expected."

Duelm does not sympathize with people who have returned to a pre-COVID state of life without taking the necessary cautions such as masks and social distancing.

> "I honestly don't know how safe I feel at school, but because I have to go no matter what, it's less stressful if I just don't think about it."

"Those people may be possible carriers that are spreading the virus to other people without knowing it," Duelm said.

Sophomore Audrey Zeller no longer feels uncomfortable in public places.

"I think along with everyone else I was hesitant at first especially with the media making it a big deal," Zeller said. "After a couple months or so during quarantine I became more comfortable with the feeling of wearing masks and going out in public knowing the risk of getting sick."

Zeller found the risk of contracting the virus to be worth it to leave her house.

"Everything was closed for a good amount of time," Zeller said, "and I think if it would've gone on for any longer people would've gotten a little restless being stuck in their homes."

While most businesses claim to require masks, many don't enforce this rule beyond offering one to maskless customers. These rule breakers are a minor annoyance to some, but a source of anxiety for others.

"I feel sorta safe as long as people are wearing masks, and washing their hands," Duelm said. "If someone in public doesn't have a mask on activity while distanced, it makes me feel uneasy."

Reopening has created peace of mind for some who are not as worried about the severity of the disease. For those who have decided to remain more isolated however, reopening has put social pressure on the idea of returning to normal as quickly as possible.

Day said, "I don't think I can judge other people's decisions as long as they wear masks and take precautions."

Annual BPA charity garden succeeds despite COVID-19 challenges

by Noah Range, Culture Editor

The EHS Business Professionals of America chapter has just wrapped up its second year of maintaining its charity garden, and it has seen continued success even in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic.

BPA's charity garden started in the spring of 2019 on a small plot of land at the Liberty Apple Orchard. It grew a wide variety of vegetables to be donated to Oasis Women's Shelter in Alton.

This year, the only thing that has remained the same is the plot of land.

Planning for the garden began pre-COVID, and the approach was even more calculated than the first year. Everything was planned carefully to ensure preparedness for planting season; to save money, members grew the plants from home.

"Many of us were given seeds in order to nurture them to the point to where we can plant them," sophomore Josh Daly said. "The actual creation of the garden went very smoothly this year."

Once COVID-19 struck the Metro-East, Oasis Women's Shelter stopped accepting donations, so members had to look for an alternative. Thankfully, the Glen Ed Pantry was accepting fresh produce.

"They were very accommodating and accepted everything we offered, even if it was just a few cherry tomatoes from a late harvest," Dhruv Mathur said.

This wasn't the only challenge the garden faced from COVID-19; social distancing made it difficult to efficiently maintain it. However, thoughtful planning and hard work allowed BPA to overcome this obstacle.

"We originally had major issues with abiding by social distancing, but we managed to plant and maintain the plants in small groups," senior Braden Starck said.

The maintenance tasks associated with the garden were difficult, but members rose to the occasion.

"We went to the garden almost every other day, whether it was to water it in the heat of the summer, weed it during the rain of the spring, or pick it in the fall," Starck said.

photo courtesy of Braden Starck

photo courtesy of Braden Starck

Sophomore Josh Daly, 2020 graduate Sam Lewis, and senior Jackson Budwell tend to the crops in the BPA garden (top). The garden yielding a variety of vegetables (bottom).

The garden produced squash, zucchini, cucumbers, onions and a wide variety of tomatoes and peppers. Such a wide variety of plants required special planning.

"We did special analyses and strategically planted in patterns to maximize output," Mathur said.

All the hard work and planning paid off, as the garden was more productive than ever.

"We donated 768 pounds to the pantry, more than doubling last year's 325," Starck said. "We increased efficiency with the same size plot."

Helping out members of the community in a time of need proved to be a positive experience for all those involved. The food pantry was able to get fresh produce, and BPA was able to make a meaningful difference.

"It really opened up my eyes to the good that donating gives," Daly said.

The last challenge the garden faces is a matter of filling in the gap the senior contributors will leave, as most of its leaders are seniors.

"Right now, the priority is finding successors who are willing to step up to the challenge of this project," Mathur said. "It's a lot of work, but in the end, it is truly worth it to make a lasting difference in the community."

Sporting KC defender Winston Reid heads the ball away from Nashville SC midfielder Derrick Jones on Oct. 11. When St. Louis City SC is added in 2023, it will be the 30th team in the MLS.

Major League Soccer Heads for the Lou

by Daniel Garrison, staff writer

A St. Louis was finally able to secure an MLS franchise after decades of rumors and negotiations. The premier soccer league has considered St. Louis as a possible expansion city since 2009, but had never secured a deal due to ownership and stadium problems.

The team will play in a soccer-specific stadium in downtown St. Louis next to Union Station owned by a group led by Jo Ann Taylor Kindle, part-owner of Enterprise Car Rental. The team is the first team in MLS to have a majority woman ownership.

The crest features the arch over the merging Mississippi and Missouri rivers. It also features the words "St Louis City" in bold. The club chose this to represent all the different areas that come together to represent the city.

The team was appropriately named, "St. Louis City SC." The SC has a double meaning: "Soccer Club" and "Soccer Capital." St. Louis has always supported both the Division-II STLFC team as well as SLU soccer. Additionally, Busch Stadium has hosted friendlies between both European clubs and national teams resulting in sellout crowds.

The move is great for MLS, who has spent the last few decades trying to grow the sport in America to eventually compete with the European leagues. A team in St. Louis, one of the best sports markets in the country, will surely help with this goal. St. Louis has always supported its sports teams, but in recent years that support has grown. The Cardinals have won the World Series, and the Blues have both won the Stanley Cup and hosted the NHL all-star game within the last decade. In addition, soccer is growing among the youth in St. Louis.

Sporting Director of St. Louis City SC Lutz Pfannenstiel said his first objective was to scout the area for young players to build the team's academy program. He should have no problem finding talented players in the heartland of soccer that is the St. Louis area.

This talent includes players like senior Kaden Chiapelli.

"St. Louis is among the top areas in the country in terms of producing talent," Chiapelli said, "there are countless clubs in the area that have sent players to our national team and large foreign teams such as Barcelona."

Proof of the thriving market was on display when tickets went on sale Sept. 16. Within 15 minutes, the team received 30,000 deposits for season tickets. Within 24 hours, they received over 50,000, breaking the previous MLS record.

St. Louis fans have waited for a professional soccer team, and now St. Louis SC fans are ready to make some noise.

Watts continues to power through

by Tyler Chrenka, staff writer

The boys cross country team's top runner, junior Ryan Watts, was awarded as the Milesplit Illinois Runner of the Week, prompting excitement and pride. The award recognized Watts as one of the top runners in the state of Illinois.

But unlike the rest of the winners, this success is a new reality.

Watts moved to Edwardsville in 2019, just before the start of his sophomore year. He spent his previous years in the town of Aurora, Ill., which is just 30 minutes west of Chicago. He was known as a good runner in middle school, but it didn't go past that.

"I was a baseball player who happened to run cross country and track," Watts said. "I thought I would be playing MLB... that is definitely what my plan was."

In the midst of a successful baseball season his freshman year, Watts found out that he was going to be moving to the St. Louis area. Watts was drawn to Edwardsville after hearing that the cross country coach, George Patrylak, fully supported Watts's desires to both run competitively and play baseball.

> "I was a baseball player who happened to run cross country and track."

"I always tell our kids to join the clubs, activities and sports they are passionate about," Patrylak said. "You only have one opportunity to be a high school student and you should spend your time doing the things you love to do."

After a successful cross country season, which saw him reach a personal record (PR) by two minutes, Watts decided to stick strictly to running.

That was probably one of his better decisions considering Watts' current PRs: his 1-mile record is 4:25, his 2-mile is 9:34, and his 3-mile is 14:53.

Watts's success comes from hard work, perseverance, and perhaps most importantly, his motivation for success.

"[The ultimate goal] is definitely to win a state championship individually in track or cross country...hopefully in both, that would be kinda cool," Watts said. "But most of my goals are around the team... we want to finish top 15 [this year]... and I wanna hit top ten or top five next year with the guys."

photo by Rachel Goebel

Watts leads in the Madison County meet on Oct. 6. The regional meet was on Oct. 24 in Granite City.

With the help of Watts, the cross country team is seeing improvements.

Junior Jackson Draper said that Watts motivates the rest of the team.

"...our team has grown a lot with the help of Ryan, and I like to think that he acts like a catalyst for the varsity runners," Draper said. "He's a great leader and his fast times certainly don't hurt."

Watts has further ambitions with hopes to run at a Division I school.

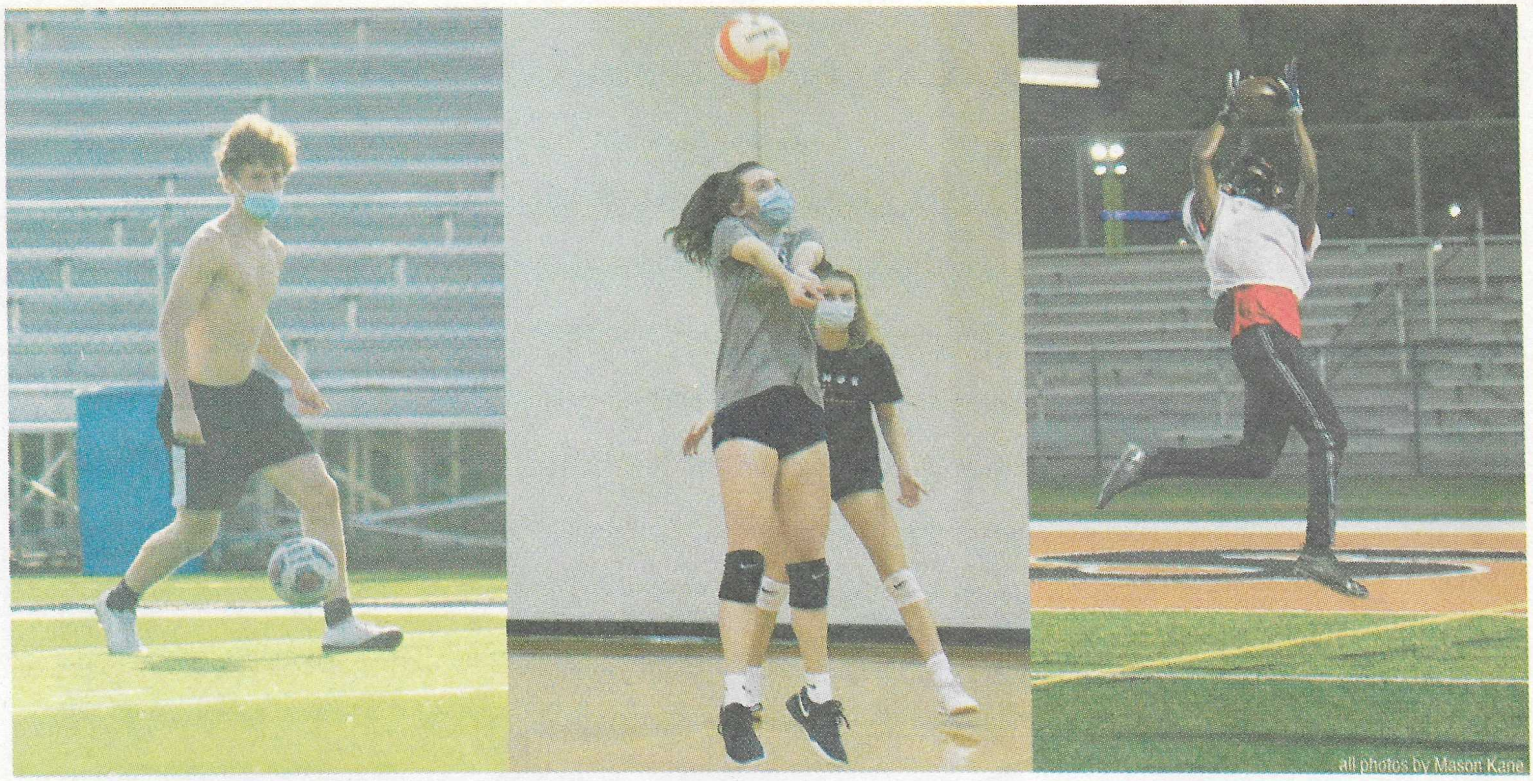
"The goal is definitely to run D1 in college. I'm a big Mizzou and North Carolina fan... I'm in contact with both of their coaches right now," Watts said. "North Carolina is a powerhouse in running, so that might be a little tougher, but I'm still in contact with Mizzou. Those are my top two favorites right now."

> "The goal is definitely to run D1 in college."

Whether it's winning the state championship or running D1, it all comes back to pushing himself.

One of the bigger challenges, Watts said, is "the wall," which runners hit with about one-half a mile left in the race.

"I always have this one quote in my mind: 'A moment of pain is worth a lifetime of glory,' which has just always stuck to me... I don't know why but it's always just in my head," Watts said. "I'm like 'ok I've gotta push just for this last little bit,' and that's where all the glory comes from."



From left: Senior Andrew Mills traps the ball and looks for a pass during a boys soccer scrimmage on Sept. 24. Freshman Sydney Davis bump passes the ball as sophomore Vyla Hupp supports. Junior Jordan Brooks catches an overhead pass during a football practice on Oct. 14.

Displaced fall athletes prepare for spring

by Landon Vuagniaux, Sports Editor

IHSA postponed football, girls volleyball and boys soccer, but athletes are already preparing for their now spring seasons.

The teams can practice starting Feb. 15 with games starting March 1, except for football, which will have its first game March 5, according to IHSA. The new season ends May 1.

The three sports were postponed as they pose a greater exposure risk than other fall sports. The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) determined these risk levels. The IDPH classifies football as a "higher" risk sport while volleyball and soccer are "medium" risk sports.

According to varsity soccer coach Mark Heiderscheid, the sports are classified as such because players are in close proximity and a ball is passed between them. For these reasons, Coach Heiderscheid said he wasn't surprised by the decision announced in late summer.

"My reaction was more relief than disappointment..." Coach Heiderscheid said. "It was clear that there was little hope [soccer] would be allowed to participate in the fall."

Despite their seasons being delayed, athletes have still been able to practice, scrimmage and work out.

"We are having open gyms..., but if we practice, it's usually split up into [a] passer and hitter..." junior volleyball player Emma Garner said. "We are encouraged to independently workout and practice by ourselves."

> "Coming into this year, I believed that something would be different. I anticipated the season being postponed or even cancelled, but I'm glad we can possibly play in the spring."

Garner said school players can also play with a club team. Now, she said many players likely won't return to the EHS team this year because they would prefer to play for a club team.

Volleyball players are not the only athletes who practice with club.

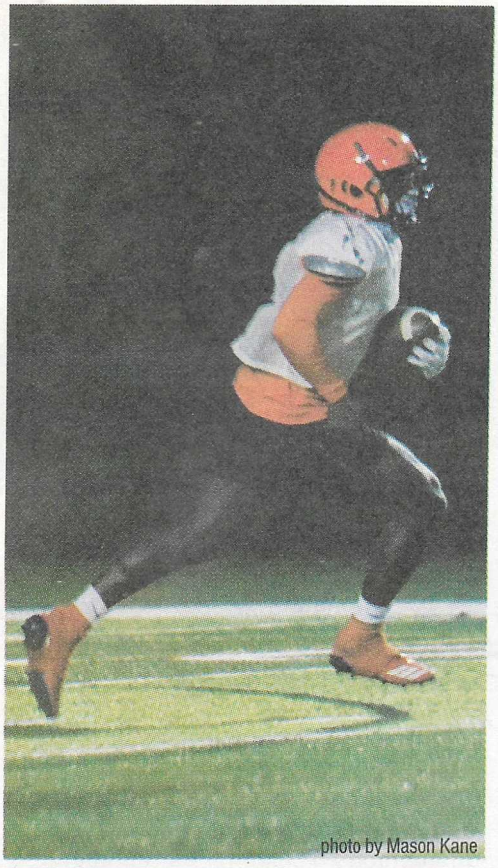
According to sophomore Joel Kampwerth, some soccer players have been doing the same. Kampwerth said he believes many are doing this because they weren't allowed to play this summer, and like him, didn't expect to play this fall.

Since IHSA altered the season schedules, the three sports can now practice for a limited amount of time. Between Sept. 7 and Oct. 31, IHSA is allowing out of season sports to have 20 "contact days" in which coaches "provide instruction in the skills and techniques of each sport" to athletes. Teams can drill with a ball, scrimmage without contact and go through plays.

Kampwerth said that although there are significantly less practices, they are relatively normal.

"...Practices are basically just scrimmages, but we have to have our masks on," Kampwerth said. "Scrimmages are 11v11 with no referees. There are two sessions, and they are split up by age. The first session is freshmen, and the second session is sophomores through seniors."

Unlike soccer practices, which are somewhat normal, football practices are greatly restricted.



Senior Justin Johnson carries the ball down the field during a football practice on Oct. 14.

The team would be well into its season and would have had several games by this time of year, but now they are restricted to the 20 contact days and other IHSA guidelines.

"For practices, we only get one hour where before we had two and a half hours," senior Grant Matarelli said. "Also, we don't get to have full contact hitting... [and] in a regular season without COVID, we could be hitting and getting ready for game-like scenarios."

Regardless of the limitations, the coaches are trying to make practices as normal as possible "without breaking any rules," according to Matarelli.

"We run through plays and formations on offense, and on defense we go over coverages and lining up against different formations," Matarelli said. "We practice three days a week for an hour and then have weight lifting."

This is temporary, he said. When the contact period concludes, the team will only be able to lift weights until February when the season starts.

Ultimately, the football, soccer and volleyball seasons will be shorter this year with fewer games. According to IHSA, sports will play "regular season schedules," which means teams compete with schools in the surrounding area only.

In addition, state series are not guaranteed and "will be determined on a sport by sport basis;" football, for example, can "anticipate" seven games and a "regional postseason," IHSA said.

Luckily, the uncertainty of the season has not brought Garner down.

> "Since IHSA altered the season schedules, the three sports can now practice for a limited amount of time. Between Sept. 7 and Oct. 31, IHSA is allowing out of season sports to have 20 'contact days'..."

"Coming into this year, I believed that something would be different," Garner said. "I anticipated the season being postponed or even canceled, but I'm glad we can possibly play in the spring."

Coach Heiderscheid feels similarly.

"This is a tough year," Coach Heiderscheid said. "But I am still trying to make it 'the best season ever' or as much as I can for the current school year."

Seniors!

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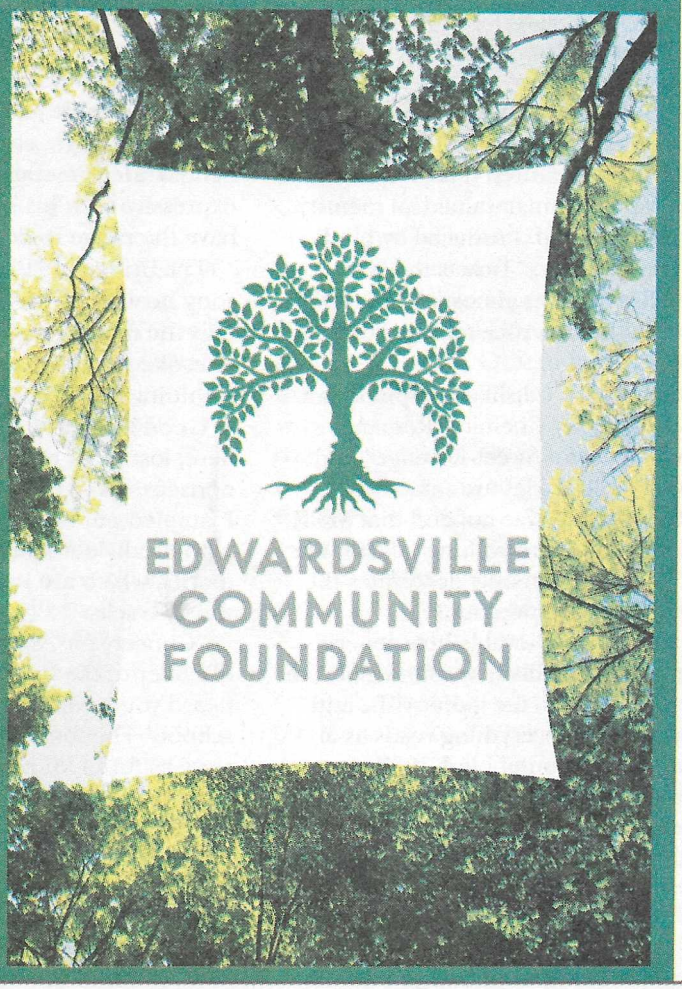


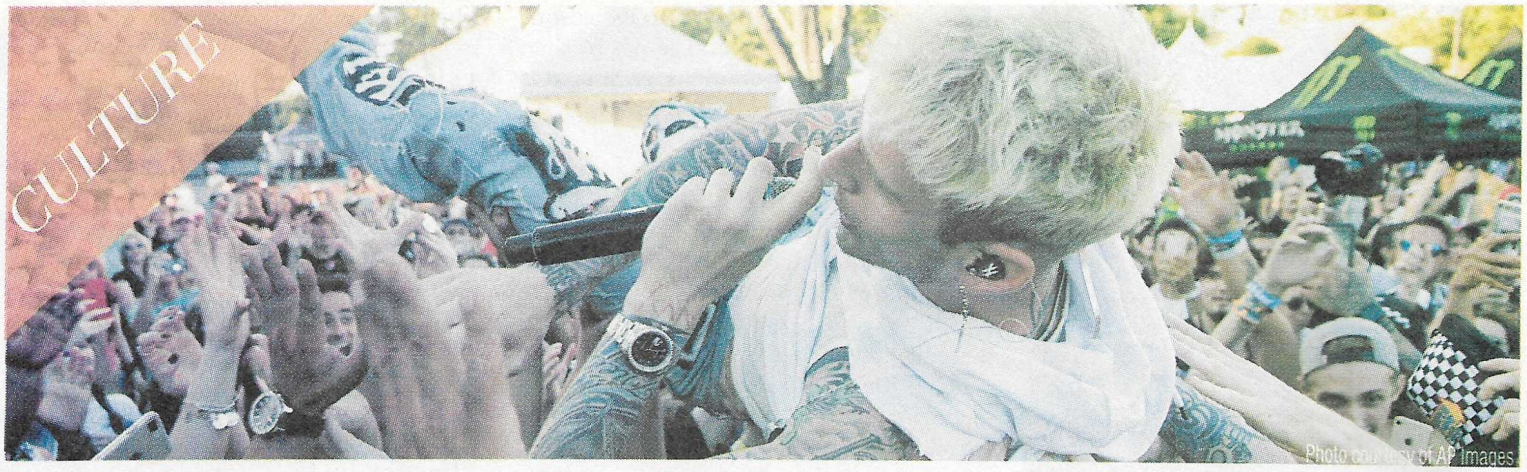


Photo courtesy of AP Images

'Tickets to My Downfall' proves pop-punk is dead while spitting on its grave

by Noah Range, Culture Editor

"Tickets to My Downfall" is a landmark moment in Machine Gun Kelley's career, as the former rapper has completeled his transition into pop-punk, fully sung vocals and all. Yet, the only thing truly "landmark" about it is the genre shift itself; at its core, the album is vapid, sterile, derivative and often unlistenable.

This isn't the first time MGK has experimented with rock aesthetics. 2019's "Hotel Diablo" featured many rap-rock fusions, yet it still maintained an identity as a hip-hop record. Produced by blink-182's Travis Barker, "Tickets to My Downfall" abandons almost all of MGK's hip-hop roots, with rock taking the center stage.

I certainly don't dislike pop-punk as a genre. In fact, My Chemical Romance's "Three Cheers for Sweet Revenge" and Green Day's "Dookie" are some of my favorite records. I was hopeful that MGK would introduce a refreshing take on the genre, yet his album only desecrates the goodwill of 2000's pop-punk.

It's almost unbelievable how generic and uninteresting his new sound is. From the drum patterns, the guitar riffs, and the songwriting, everything reads as an inferior duplication of blink-182's ideas from records like "Enema of the State."

The album's production is so sanitary that it's nearly vomit-inducing. There is not a single punchy riff for its entire duration; instead, the guitars only make background noise at the bottom of the mix. There's no edge here. No bite.

The drums are just as obnoxious as the guitars. They are compressed beyond salvation, combining with the wishy-washy guitars to create dull instrumentals, which are often painful to listen to.

Maching Gun Kelley's vocals are the most intolerable aspect of the record. His delivery is rough, shouty and awkward to behold. He sometimes tries to be more expressive with his singing, but he doesn't have the range to do so in a pleasing way.

The bridge of "Bloody Valentine," the song he won a VMA for, is where his voice fails the most. He restrains his delivery to evoke more emotion, only to end up sounding creaky and over-the-top.

Good lyrics are few and far between here, lost in an endless sea of unoriginal nonsense. As I listened to the album, I laughed out loud a few times at the pathetically derivative pop and pop-punk motifs, which are strung all over each of the 15 tracks.

"Concert for Aliens" is the worst offender of the bunch. The lyrics "I heard you never graduated from high school/ The food sucked and the kids were awful/ I know you wanted me to go to law school/ I dyed my hair, pierced my nostril" sound more like a hilarious parody of pop-punk clichés than a rebellious reflection.

The album's songwriting ranges from mediocre to obnoxious to excruciatingly painful. There are no catchy hooks or attention-grabbing verses, and the progressions are so lackluster that most songs end up feeling inconsequential.

"Kiss Kiss" is a perfect example of MGK's subpar writing skills. The chorus is so annoying and repetitive that I had to fight the urge to skip, as "Kiss kiss/ Kiss kiss the bottle all night" repeats multiple times throughout the tracks duration.

Worst of all, "Tickets to My Downfall" simply does not live up to its "punk" moniker. Nothing about it is rebellious, aggressive or edgy. It's all by-the-numbers, lowest-common-denominator pop, and calling it "punk" is doing true punk music a disservice.

"Tickets to My Downfall" may have tried to revive pop-punk, but it has only succeeded in proving that the genre will never get its soul back. It fails to encapsulate the aggressive, fun-loving energy of classic pop-punk and it doesn't feel like it tries to.

By no means am I saying the album is bad solely because it isn't as punk as I wanted it to be. The album is still of miserable quality and is almost never sonically pleasing. Quite frankly, it is the worst album I have heard all year.

If you ended up enjoying this album, can I recommend some My Chemical Romance or Green Day?

Please Mr. West, no more today

by Daniel Garrison, staff writer

Kanye West has been one of the most influential hip-hop artists of the 21st century, making albums that have become staples of modern hip hop, but in 2020, Kanye has made headlines for just about everything besides music.

Kanye has always been known for his antics. Everyone remembers his feud at the 2009 VMAs, when he interrupted Taylor Swift's acceptance speech to announce that Beyonce was more deserving of the award, or his announcement at the 2015 VMAs when he announced he would run for president in 2020 (he does not have a good track record at the VMAs.)

Kanye made good on his promise to run for president as a nominee of the newly created "Birthday Party." His campaign has been nothing short of chaotic. In his attempt to get on the ballot in all 50 states, Kanye West has faced accusations of faking signatures and ballot fraud.

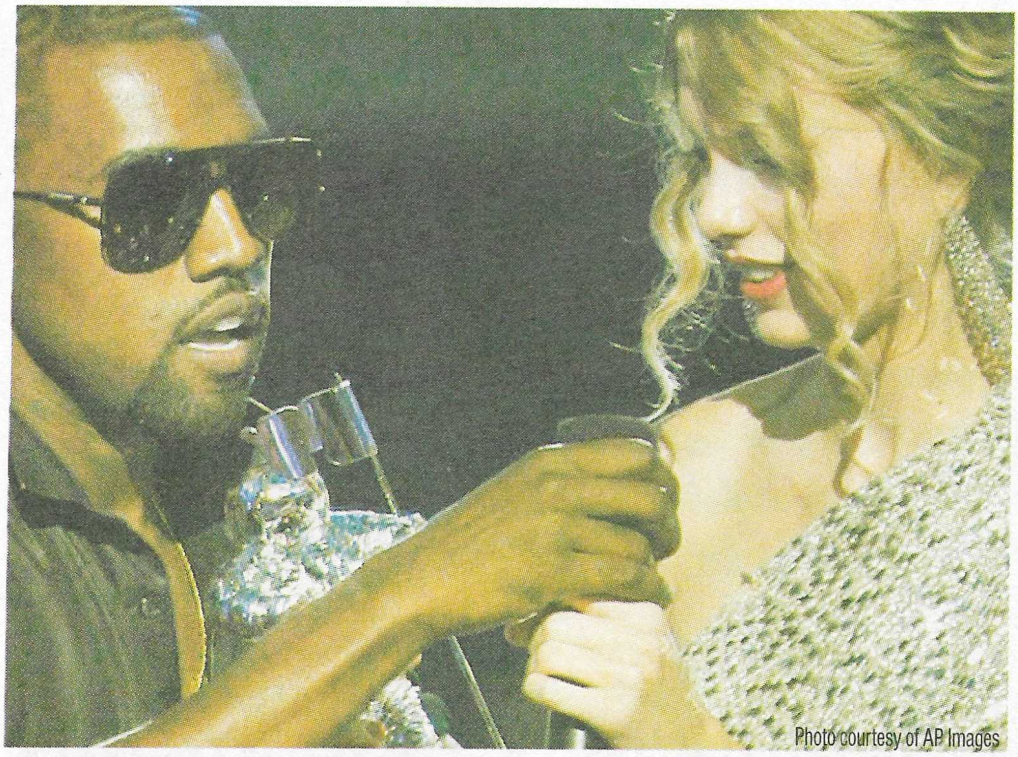


Photo courtesy of AP Images

Kanye West grabs the microphone from Taylor Swift during her acceptance speech in the now-famous MTV Video Music Awards incident, which took place in 2009. Swift won Best Female Video, but Kanye proclaimed Beyonce's video superior.

> "Notably, he was temporarily banned [on Twitter] on Sept. 16 for uploading a video of himself urinating on his Grammy award. The video was a form of protest about contracts between artists and music labels."

According to ABC News, he is facing lawsuits in Wisconsin, Ohio, and West Virginia for reasons such as signature fraud and running as an independent despite being a registered Republican. Many are accusing Kanye of distracting voters and trying to take votes from Democratic candidate Joe Biden.

Presidential candidate Kanye West has had only one rally, which was in South Carolina on July 20. The event mostly made headlines for his controversial claim "Harriet Tubman did not actually free any slaves." During the event Kanye also suggested that "Everyone who has a baby should get a million dollars."

Although Kanye has not been active on the campaign trail in recent months, he has been very active on Twitter. Notably, he was temporarily banned on Sept. 16 for uploading a video of himself urinating on his Grammy award. The video was a form of protest about contracts between artists and music labels. On the same day, Kanye uploaded pictures of his entire contract with his label UMG and said he would not release any more music until his contract is re-negotiated.

This comes after a tweet in July in which Kanye announced he would release his new album "DONDA." The album, of course, never released and is looking increasingly unlikely that it will. Kanye has not released any music since the 2019 album "Jesus is King," Kanye's first entirely religious album.

Instead of music, Kanye seems to have devoted more time to fashion recently. He has released new pictures of Yeezy slippers. The designs are very out-there and do not look like any other shoe on the market. Additionally, Kanye, whose Yeezy brand is owned by Adidas, has demanded to be on Adidas' board of executives. He also tweeted he will bring Adidas and the brand Puma back together despite their designs being "embarrassingly trash." Something tells me his collaboration might not happen.

Many speculate Kanye's recent behaviors are a result of his diagnosed bipolar disorder. Others speculate that they are a result of marriage troubles with his wife Kim Kardashian. In tweets that have since been deleted, he claimed that Kim is trying to "lock him up." Rumors of divorce between the two have been spiraling.

It is evident that Kanye and his family are going through difficult times. Kanye broke into tears during his rally about his daughter. One thing is clear: the constant media attention can not be good for Kanye in his current state. Kanye fans love his flamboyant personality, but his health and happiness should come first.

Art by Sarah Fidahussain

Inspired by Travis Scott and Charli D'Amelio's promotional content for their signature foods.

Are influencer foods worth the hype? Not really.

by Abi Zajac, Views Editor

2020 can be called the year of influencers, people who use social media to make a living.

They can be found on YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and more. But how do these people most of their money? Brand deals. Influencers "partner" with a brand a.k.a. get paid to endorse a product on their social media accounts. Influencers can make thousands of dollars, just for one post.

"Young adults are increasingly turning to what influencers and celebrities are recommending," according to CMO Morgan Flatley in an interview with Business Insider.

A different type of brand deal is arising though: influencer food. A fast food company partners with an influencer or celebrity to make their signature meal or drink a menu item, enticing consumers to buy, and sometimes pay more for an item already on the menu.

I like to call this cashing in on the hype. Buying something that your favorite musician or star orders makes you feel undeniably cool and in-the-know, but it also makes you a victim to a marketing scheme.

The Travis Scott Meal

One rapper who cashed in on this marketing trend is Travis Scott. McDonald's introduced rapper Travis Scott's order to the public for $6 on Sept. 8.

> "Buying something that your favorite musician or star orders makes you feel undeniably cool and in-the-know, but it also makes you a victim to a marketing scheme."

The meal is great if you like paying $9 for a mediocre McDonald's burger and fries.

It was a genius marketing move, creating a new, exciting menu item without adding any labor or financial burdens during a pandemic, but I feel cheated as a consumer. A regular quarter pounder meal is $5.79, according to Fast Food Menu Prices. The Travis Scott meal, which is a bacon quarter pounder with fries, Tangy BBQ sauce and a Sprite retails for $9 now. That's an extra $3 for a couple pieces of tough bacon.

The experience of eating the burger is tolerable. The bacon adds richness to the flavor profile contrasting with the two slices of cheese. But, the fries were cold, soggy and mediocre paired with the BBQ sauce. The Sprite was a terrible addition to the soggy fries and second-rate burger: Sprite is probably the least refreshing soda in existence, and it made me long for the Dr Pepper I usually order with my meal.

Save yourself the $3, avoid the hype and order your classic meal, not some rapper's. You'll be much more satisfied.

The Charli Dunkin' Coffee

I was pleasantly surprised by TikTok star Charli D'Amelio's signature drink. "The Charli," which is a Dunkin Donuts cold brew with a splash of whole milk and three pumps of caramel swirl, is better than the average Dunkin drink. I should add that I am not normally a fan of Dunkin coffee.

Keith from the Try Guys best describes the experience of drinking most of Dunkin's coffees in his "Keith Eats & Drinks Everything At Dunkin Donuts" video: "It doesn't taste like drinking ice coffee. It takes like taking a swig of the creamer from your fridge door."

In contrast, this cold-brew concoction is everything most Dunkin coffees aren't. It tastes smooth and perfectly balances the sweetness of the syrup with the bitterness of the coffee. There's not a hint of caramel flavor though; it tastes distinctly of cinnamon. Instead, the caramel works undetected to blend the coffee flavor with the milk, making it not too acidic or creamy.

A medium "The Charli" is only $3.19 and worth the cash as well as the hype.

Make the best of masks with a little flair

by Lily Heddinghaus, staff writer

Most high schoolers never imagined a world where they would be required to wear a mask to school. But in 2020, wearing a mask to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is the reality.

Students stroll to class wearing disposable surgical masks, store-bought cloth masks, N95 masks, home-made T-shirt masks, and even bandanas. A mask covering half of your face and restricting your breathing can be irritating, uncomfortable, or simply an inconvenience.

Yet others find wearing a mask can be both functional and fashionable. An Instagram poll asking "Do you match your mask to your outfit?" revealed that 38 percent of students do match their masks and 62 percent of students do not.

Senior Ben Hauschild voted no. "I don't match because it is just unnecessary," Hauschild said. "You would have to have so many masks to do that." Hauschild bought two cloth masks from REI, blue and black, and thinks that they are just enough.

Sophomore Abi Burroughs doesn't think mask fashion is important either. "It is just too much to think about, and I don't have that much coordination," Burroughs said. "Also, wearing a mask used to bother me, but I'm so used to it now that I don't even know I have it on." Sophomore Jadyn Noll believes her protective mask can double as an accessory.

"I feel like it completes my outfit if I match my mask to the shoes I am wearing," Noll said. "It makes me happy."

This mask fashion craze isn't new. Before COVID-19 reached the United States, Billie Eilish wore a bedazzled Gucci mask to the Grammys. Etsy sold more than 12 million masks in April alone. As the months of quarantine have dragged on, high-fashion designers have released full mask collections.

Now thousands of mask options are available, and senior Lino Gramgalia thinks that choosing one can be empowering.

"It definitely feels more fun because I feel like I have a choice, like I'm not being told what to do," Gramgalia said.

Senior Emma Krumm uses her masks to express herself and stand out.

"I coordinate my mask with my outfits because it makes me feel better, and since I can't talk to people as much, it shows them my personality a little bit!" Krumm said.

Krumm bought her pink, strawberry and cow print masks on Etsy. She said the color and pattern influence her outfits.

"I always love to match pink outfits with my pink strawberry mask," Krumm said.

Those that voted no understand the importance of wearing their masks. "Wearing a mask is definitely a necessary evil," Hauschild said. "Without it I wouldn't have much of a senior year."

Those that voted yes are embracing the new reality and learning to love their masks.

"If I can mix things up and wear a cool mask, why not?" Gramgalia said. "I just like to make it a little more fun with everything going on in the world."

Senior Emma Krumm displays and models her favorite masks. She said she often coordinates her masks with her outfits.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg arrives for President Barack Obama's address in 2009, greeting members of Congress as she enters the chamber. RBG rose to icon status during her tenure on the U.S. Supreme Court.

Death of an icon sparks political turmoil

by Claw Staff

The 2020 election has always been more important than most. Between the pandemic, a healthcare crisis, a fragile economy, protests against police brutality and two candidates vehemently opposed on almost all of these important issues, both Democrats and Republicans were already preparing for one of the most intense and monumental elections in history.

But the passing of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg raised the stakes even higher.

President Bill Clinton appointed Ginsburg to the Supreme Court in 1993, and she has since risen to icon status because of her work for women's, LGBTQ+ and minority rights.

She earned the nickname "The Notorious RBG" after issuing one of her most renowned dissents when the Supreme Court "invalidated a key part of the Voting Rights Act," according to NBC News. This, along with parodies on SNL, made her a household name throughout the country.

America fell in love. People made slogans, stickers, pins and costumes, and suddenly everyone wanted to know everything about "The Notorious RBG." Ginsburg responded by sharing her exercise routine, giving a closet tour and connecting to the younger generation in a way her colleagues had never done before; she helped a new generation care about politics.

After she lost her life to metastatic pancreatic cancer on Sept. 18, many began to worry about how this will affect the upcoming election.

Given the timing of Ginsburg's death, any attempt to appoint a new justice should be postponed until after the election.

Prior to Ginsburg's passing, the Supreme Court had a 5-4 conservative majority, though Justice John Roberts sometimes sided with the liberals. This somewhat-even mixture of justices allowed for a system in which both parties could be held in check, keeping bias within the court at a minimum, according to NPR.

If President Trump's nominee, Amy Coney Barrett, is appointed during the final months of his term, she would give the court a 6-3 conservative bias. This could eliminate the balance on the court, leading to an increase in conservative bias when determining cases.

Barrett is well-regarded by the older, more conservative generations for her stance on issues like abortion and The Affordable Care Act. Though her stance on these issues is exactly what makes her so appealing to some, younger generations that are becoming increasingly liberal find Barrett's appointment frightening.

Regardless of political affiliation, the appointment of a new justice so close to the election has historically been regarded as immoral. Ginsburg recognized this, and just days before passing, she expressed her hopes about how her legacy will be respected.

"My most fervent wish is that I will not be replaced until a new president is installed," she said.

Despite Ginsburg's dying wish, the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Republican Lindsey Graham, has chosen to proceed with the vetting process of Barrett. Some may feel he is right in doing so, arguing that the stakes are too high to respect Ginsburg's wish. Whether that argument is valid or not, Graham's actions and words in a similar scenario in 2016 further invalidate his decision.

When Justice Antonin Scalia died in February of 2016, nearly nine months before the election, Senate Republicans argued to block President Obama's nominee. They argued that "... the seat should not be filled in an election year," according to Time.

Graham openly supported that argument and demonstrated this in a speech to the rest of the Senate during the vetting process of Obama's nominee.

"I want you to use my words against me. If there's a Republican president in 2016 and a vacancy occurs in the last year of the first term, you can say Lindsey Graham said let's let the next president, whoever it might be, make that nomination."

Now that the tables are turned, Republicans couldn't care less what they said four years ago.

Whether President Trump manages to appoint Barrett now or the Senate decides to make him wait, Ginsburg's successor will influence the country for generations. So, as Sen. Ted Cruz said in 2016, "Let the election decide."

Your advice is not as helpful as you think

by Cassi Reaka, Editor-in-Chief

I've spent hundreds of hours over the course of my life deciding what I want to do with the rest of it, specifically where I want to go to college and what career I want to pursue.

Throughout my 17 years, I've considered and moved on from potential careers including princess, mail carrier, detective, pop star, engineer (middle school me was delusional about my math skills) and lawyer, but I eventually settled on journalist.

Although I've known that I don't like math since sixth grade, I got stuck on engineering because I was always told that's what makes money and that's where all of the future jobs are. It didn't help that both my parents and many members of my extended family have degrees in engineering, but all this "advice" did was stop me from exploring careers that I would actually be interested in.

I know that I would not be happy and therefore not as successful as I could be in a math related field. It can be discouraging to constantly hear how the only careers worthwhile are in STEM. It's important that people go into this field and continue to advance society through science and math, but it is not the only option.

This is just one example of how "advice" that adults intend to be helpful may only make students doubt their choices about higher education. Teachers, parents and schools should feel responsible for giving students all of their options and then they should step back. Should an individual student ask for an opinion or advice, feel free to give it. But saying something that will cause someone to doubt that they should do something they are passionate about is damaging.

"This is just one example of how 'advice' that adults intend to be helpful may only make students doubt their choices about higher education."

The other major question of senior year is the "where are you going to college?" No matter what a senior's answer to this question is, everyone has an opinion they feel the need to share.

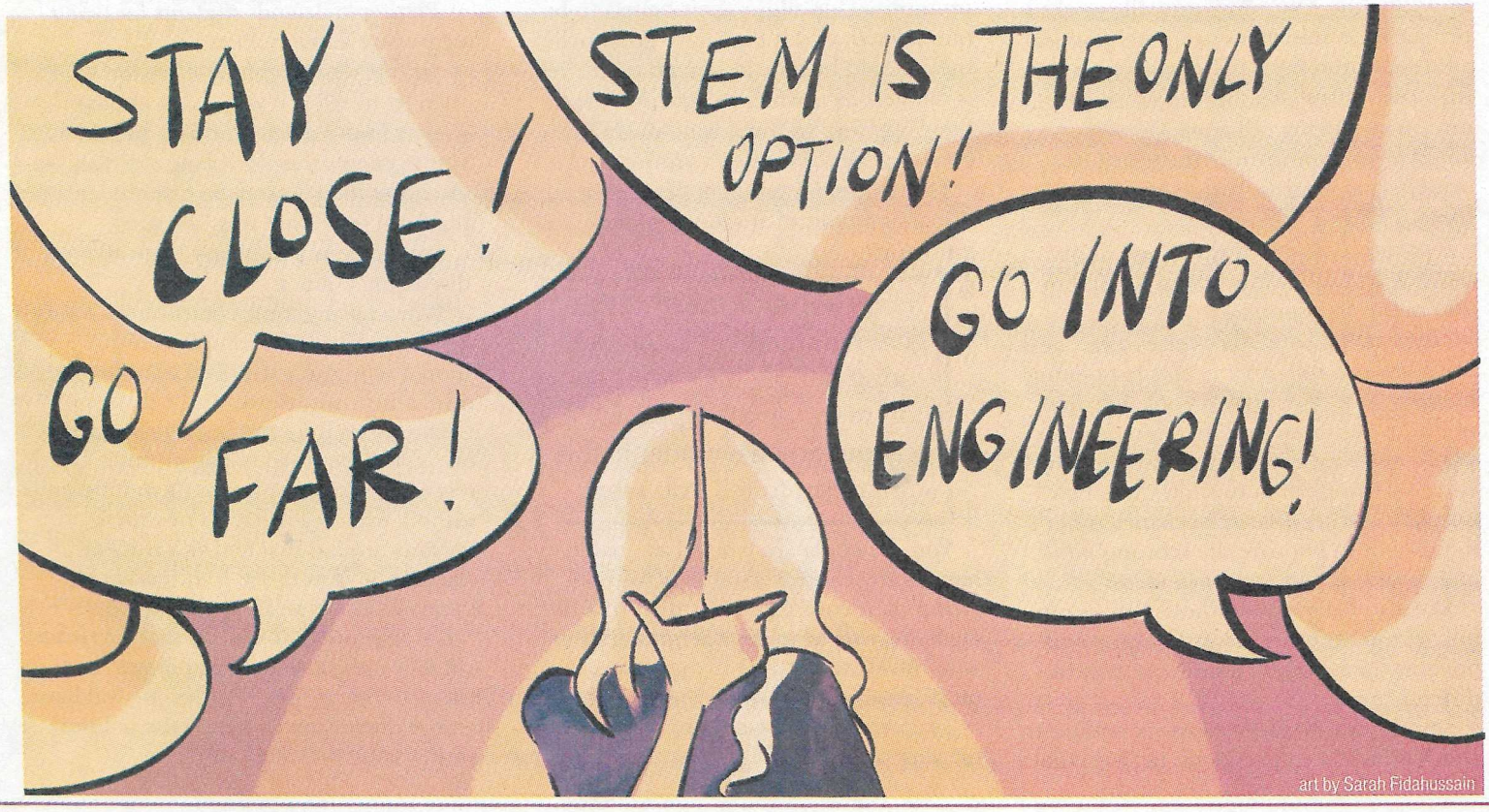
I decided at the end of last year that I wanted to go to Mizzou after researching tons and tons of colleges and considering the cost, how far I wanted to be from home and what opportunities were offered for my major. I applied in early August and got accepted, so I haven't and am not planning on applying anywhere else.

Apparently only applying to one school raises tons of red flags. "Did you consider any other options?" and "So we're putting all of our eggs in one basket," are responses I receive way too often.

But we could answer anything and still receive criticism. If you know exactly where you want to go, you haven't considered all of your options. If you have no idea where you want to go, you're way behind in the process. If you're considering a few schools, then this one is terrible and this other one is where you should go.

Yes, some guidance in trying to navigate the thousands of colleges and universities out there is nice, but trust me when I say your snap judgment that took two seconds to formulate does not take into account all of the factors that students spend so much time considering.

This "guidance" often accomplishes nothing but inserting doubt in a student's mind. So please do seniors everywhere a favor, and keep your opinions to yourself.



art by Sarah Fidahussain

Students need to care about politics

by Sarah Fidahussain, Student Life Editor

2020 is a year made for the history books.

With the Black Lives Matter movement, the pandemic and the election, it is obvious we are in – and have been in– a very politically divisive and controversial year. While we have faced some huge historical events, before this year young people have shied away from becoming politically aware.

Today's youth are not staying silent about climate change, current political leaders and the injustices done to people of color, and why should they? These things don't just affect people 18-years-old and older, they affect all of us.

If these issues affect everyone, why is it taboo to talk about them in school, where we are meant to be prepared for the real world and real world issues?

There are places in EHS that acknowledge this and thrive from political discussions. From classrooms to clubs, they share how political and controversial discussions have led to success.

Senior Elaine Wei, Asian Youth for Civic Engagement board member, said their club tackles these issues and the importance of these discussions.

"While the AYCE Edwardsville works primarily on initiatives to spread political awareness to others, I also work with the other board members to weave in discussion during full team meetings about what's going on in the world in order to increase the awareness of our own members," Wei says.

Not only does she feel this way about tackling situations this way in AYCE but also in the classroom.

"Expressing your voice raises awareness of your ideas and other events happening in the world," Wei says. "People become somewhat ignorant of other perspectives when they aren't being expressed much, and so it's important to show these new insights, not necessarily to change other's minds, but to improve the thoroughness and complexity of their own ideas."

She also believes that these discussions impact our attitudes toward politics and open us up to "opportunities to make a difference such as voting."

Senior Jack Pizziferro, history enthusiast and Model UN co-president, believes that uncomfortable topics need to be discussed and students need to learn how to be okay with being uncomfortable.

art by Sarah Fidahussain

"Students should state their political opinions. This allows their beliefs to be questioned, and if they have good beliefs, they should be able to defend them. What is dangerous is when people don't state their opinion, so there is no room for conversation," Pizziferro says.

One potential problem people foresee discussing politics at school is students' immaturity.

> "Look at our society in this given moment, and then tell young people they are being too rash; we are upset for a reason. So give students the platform to tell you why."

Young people are labeled as unable to handle any controversial topic without losing their cool. However, high school teachers, who arguably spend more time with this demographic than anyone, do not feel this way.

Teachers in our own school have seen the very opposite.

"No, I never cease to be amazed at my students' capability for maturity [to handle controversial and political topics]," history teacher Keith Baker says.

Pizziferro defends students for being aggressive about politics.

"If one were to think we are too rash, then let us tell you why. Look at our society in this given moment, and then tell young people they are being too rash; we are upset for a reason. So give students the platform to tell you why," he says.

Still, there is a right way to go about discussing politics.

When having these controversial topics discussed in a classroom, the teacher should only guide the discussion, not reveal their own views.

Once, I heard a teacher's perspective on a topic that I did not agree with. The rest of the year I looked at them differently without even realizing it. I tied their persona around that and as a student you do not want to see your teacher as someone who is working against you.

It is impossible to believe that everyone will follow this protocol, but if everyone listens to others' perspectives, we will have a more dimensional view on the political world that affects all of our lives.

School is not the place for politics

art by Sarah Fidahussain

by Holly Williams, staff writer

We should not talk about politics in school, because as a nation, as a society and as a school district, we are divided enough by our ethnicities, wealth, upbringing or social standing.

That being said, I do think that everyone has a right to their own political opinion, but I feel that there are times and places to discuss them but school isn't one of them.

With today's ultra-sensitive society, what seem like the littlest comments erupt into heated debates and feuds, which leave everyone with a bad taste in their mouths.

Knowing how people lean is especially uncomfortable when a political discussion comes up and you are one of the few people in class who shares the opposing opinion. You don't want to speak up because you don't want to add fuel to the fire, but you also don't want to sit there and have others criticize your belief system.

In one particular year, I sat in a class where both the students and the teacher were in agreement about a particular party. While they may not have specified one particular name over another, their comments made it clear their opinions. Throughout the year, the students and the teacher constantly criticized the beliefs and actions of the party with which I agreed.

The focus of the class would often switch to a political discussion even if the class started off on some mundane topic, ruining the otherwise enjoyable class. This whole interaction was unnecessary and could be avoided by everyone keeping their mouths shut about politics and focusing on the task at hand.

I'm at school to learn; I'm not at school to know whether my teacher or the kid sitting next to me is conservative, liberal or somewhere in between. The fact that I know how they lean does not change the fact they lean that way.

Not only do people feel like they need to assert their opinion, but oftentimes they steal their parents' views or pass judgment based on haphazard posts on social media or news reports. While I will give some students credit for doing research and staying up to date, I don't believe that most students put the time into picking a side based on their belief system and morals.

The fact of the matter is regardless of where you stand, as long as you come to that conclusion out of your own volition then you have a leg to stand on.

Not including political parties, people label others and put them into categories based on how they present themselves, their interests and their ethnicity which oftentimes lead to an "us vs them" mindset. As cliché as it sounds, stereotypes like nerd, jock, and emo still persist in modern society.

"I'm at school to learn; I'm not at school to know whether my teacher or the kid sitting next to me is conservative, liberal or somewhere in between. The fact that I know how they lean does not change the fact they lean that way."

For many people, if you don't share their beliefs or interests, they put you in a category beneath them. It's like how we view most EHS sports opponents: for many teams that we play against, we have negative connotations toward them simply because they are not the team we believe in. But whether one has negative feelings toward them or not, the division is still there.

I know thwat it is a foolish notion to believe that politics will become a taboo conversation topic in school, but I think that everyone should be mindful about when and where they share their political opinions.

New principal dismantles outdated honor system for '24 grads, rightfully so

by Marian Steinmann, staff writer

Graduation is still seven months away, which sounds far off, but soon enough the day will arrive when 700 seniors and their closest friends and family crowd into the gym for the ceremony.

Although hundreds of the students who cross the stage will have achieved academic excellence, only one will be recognized for his or her hard work.

Now, is this really fair? The majority of these seniors prioritized school for the past four years and all of them crossed the finish line, but only one student gets a first-place ribbon?

Some may argue yes, but they are probably the same people who have been playing the system since the first day of high school, hoping to be crowned valedictorian. The rest of us have a different perspective on the topic.

The class rank system has numerous problems, and the biggest problem occurs as soon as eighth-grade students pick their freshman classes.

Because P.E. isn't factored into GPA, freshmen who take only the core classes have five grades in their average. For students taking all the available honors classes— assuming they achieve straight A's—this results in a 4.6 GPA.

Here's the problem: not all freshmen take the core classes. Some will take a performing art, summer school or early bird class; however, they will be penalized for this decision by earning a 4.5 GPA.

Now, don't get me wrong, a 4.5 is still phenomenal, but that isn't the point. The point is that the school should be awarding credit where credit is due. If two students take the same honors classes and earn the same grades, the student taking orchestra shouldn't receive a lower GPA.

This system leaves students who branch out from the mundane, school-required courses with virtually no chance of earning valedictorian their senior year.

Nearly four years ago, as my middle school career came to an end, I was speaking with a close friend about our aspirations for high school. She hoped to be class president, and I dreamed of being valedictorian.

As we chose the classes we'd take freshman year, I decided to continue in the performing arts program by taking band; I had no idea that pursuing my musical passions would destroy my academic goal. My friend would go on to be class president our sophomore year, but by that point, my dream of being first in the class had died: it died the second I wrote 'band' on my schedule.

art by Sarah Fidahussain

If I could travel back in time with the knowledge I have now, I would take band again without hesitation. The love I have for that program far exceeds any desire to be first in the class; however, it still pains me that I couldn't have both, that the school system couldn't allow me to pursue valedictorian alongside my musical career.

Thankfully, this system won't be in place for much longer. With the board of education's approval, Principal Steve Stuart replaced the valedictorian system with the Latin ranking system, also known as the Laude system.

The Laude system replaces the positions of valedictorian and salutatorian with three classes of achievement based on GPA: Cum Laude (4.00-4.25), Magna Cum Laude (4.30-4.59) and Summa Cum Laude (4.60-5.00). This system will recognize roughly 22% of the graduating class, rather than just two students.

Dr. Stuart sent an email explaining his decision to move forward with the Laude system:

"Some parents and students have learned how to manipulate the [class rank] system to allow for more weighted courses that boost the GPA to get ahead of the other students in the class, class ranking creates unnecessary stress on students... and colleges are getting away from using class rankings in their determination of admittance and the awarding of scholarships," Stuart said.

This new policy will begin with the class of 2024, and while it's too late for most of us to benefit from it, this change will be a tremendous improvement for the future EHS students. Without people gunning for first place, students can stop competing with each other and start creating mindsets that solely revolve around their academic careers and passions.

Dr. Stuart hopes that in the years to come, this modification to the class-rank system will enable students to focus on learning and performing well in class.

"I also hope this will encourage students to try a class outside of their comfort zone," Stuart said, "and possibly find an interest they never knew they had."

I applaud Dr. Stuart for disposing of a system that teaches children that high school is a game to be played and a race to be won. I believe that this new system will change our school's longstanding assumption that academic excellence and creativity can't share equal importance in a child's life, and I hope that the students who devote countless hours to their creative passions while simultaneously achieving exceptional grades will finally receive the recognition they deserve.

"ASK EHS"

What is something positive that has happened because of the changes this year?

freshman
Haley Onwiler

Spending more time with my family.

I like not going to school as much and having stuff online.

senior
Jack Pfund

freshman
Andrew Sprinkle

I have gotten to spend more time with family this year than ever before.

I have been able to work on self improvement and figure out my college plans.

senior
Olivia Melosci

sophomore
Aidan Seemiller

The changes have given time to do a lot of bucket list things such as learning to speak a new language or learn a new instrument.

This situation is changing the way I look at life in a positive way. I don't think I will ever take for granted most things I just thought were normal life before.

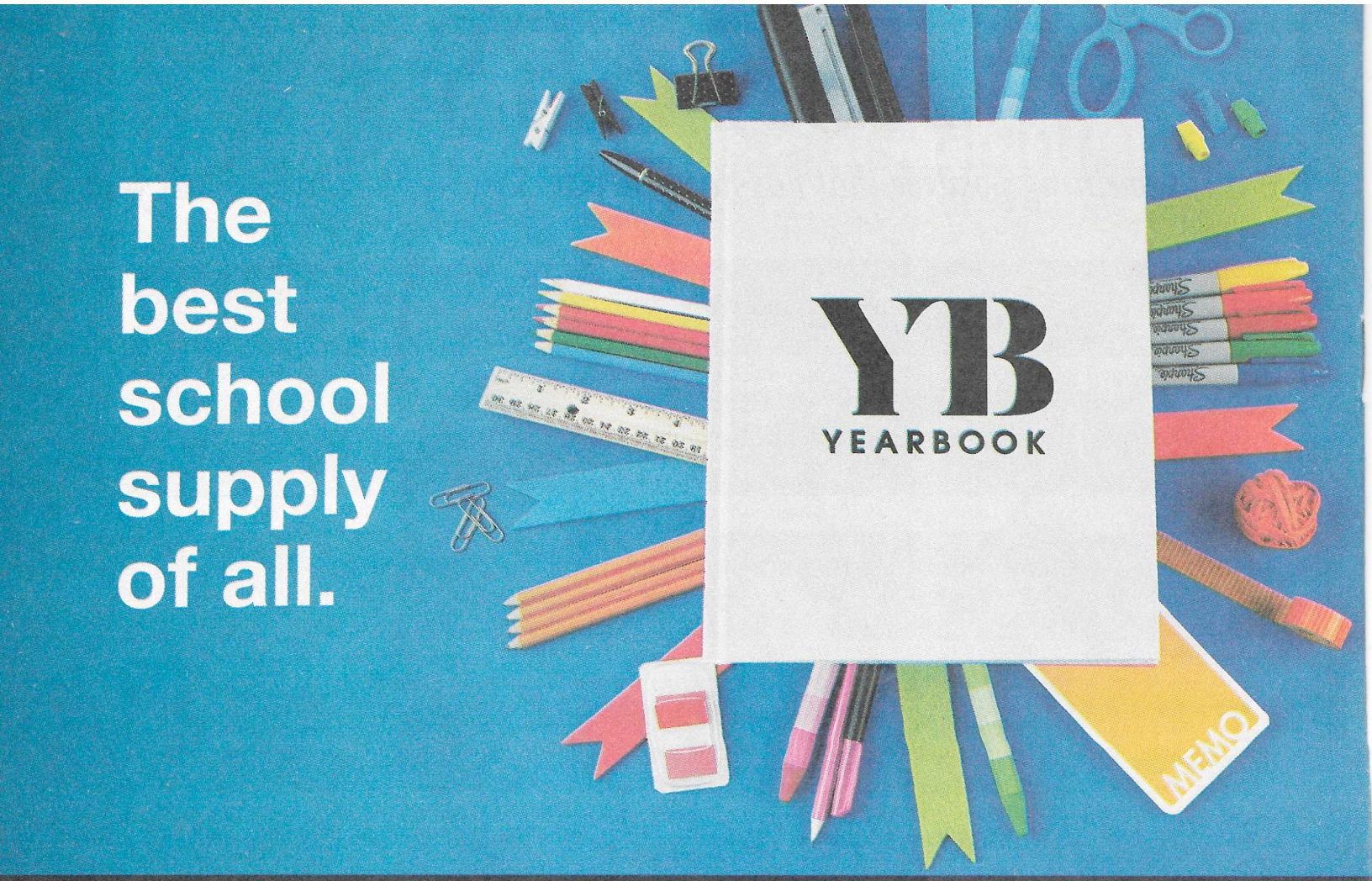
senior
Maddy Davis

junior
Alaina Hall

Everyone, staff and students, has really come together during these hard times with how quickly things have changed. The school has done a good job at keeping us safe and still giving us a great education. It's very nice to see everyone come together.

A lot more people, myself included, became more aware and more educated on matters like systemic racism and racial profiling, as well as just become more educated on global issues like child labor in fast fashion.

sophomore
Selin Aktuna



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